have been sanctioned in the State under various programmes. Further, the Government of Andhra Pradesh have launched a Water Conservation Mission on 30th April, 2000, for mitigation of drought and desertification in the State.

Constraint of Funds for CAPART

4847. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) is not providing very effective instrument to help the rural poor;

(b) if so, the details of the corrective measures being taken by Government to make it more effective;

(c) whether there is a constraint of funds for CAPART; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) No, Sir. In fact CAPART has been working effectively since its inception in 1986 to help the rural poor and disadvantaged section of the society like SC/ST, women, disabled persons bonded labour, child labour, etc. as an important funding agency for the voluntary organisation engaged in upliftment of the rural poor. Till date, CAPART has sanctioned project worth Rs.524 crores, released Rs.397 crores involving more than 18,700 projects and 8,000 voluntary organisations.

(b) The Council has taken a number of steps to improve its efficiency. Firstly, the process of decentralisation is decision making process was initiated with the result that 9 Regional Centres have been opened throughout the country where projects below Rs. 10 lakhs can be sanctioned. Secondly, the process of sanctioning of projects has been made transparent by constituting Regional Committees and National Standing Committees. Funds are sanctioned on the basis of the advice of the member who are expert in their field and know about the voluntary sector. Thirdly, empahasis is being given on HRD development of CAPART's own employees apart from the voluntary sector. Fourthly, innovative schemes are encouraged under the revised guidelines for public co-operation sector and instead of sanctioning stereo-type scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development now innovative and integrated projects can be taken up under CAPART's own guidelines. Workshops are being organised at

the regional level to encourage smaller NGOs to take up project with CAPART.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Investment Trend in Rural Areas

4848. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared in 'India Rural Development Report 1999' recently;

(b) if so, the salient features of the report;

(c) whether Government have noticed that there are disturbing trends of investment in the rural areas which is declining over the years in various States;

(d) if so, the total percentage of investment which is to be made for rural development at present; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to boost such investments?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad, an organisation of the Ministry of Rural Development, Prepared the India Rural Development Report, 1999.

(b) The salient features of the report are:

(i) Over the years, poverty has declined from 56.44 per cent in 1973-74 to 37.27 per cent in 1993-94. The regions in Western part of country had relatively lower incidence of poverty than central and eastern zones.

(ii) Though SC&ST and women headed households are significantly poorer than other, the gap has narrowed down in rural areas.

(iii) Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh account for 51 per cent of the country's poor. If Assam, Orissa, West Bengal and some Union Territories are added, these States account for over 70 per cent of poor in the country.

(iv) Majority of poor are concentrated around the poverty line which is a source of comfort in the sense that with a little focussed